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A SHORT ADDRESS TO THE GOVERNMENT, THE MERCHANTS, MANUFACTURERS, AND THE COLONISTS IN AMERICA, AND THE SUGAR ISLANDS,

On the present STATE of AFFAIRS.

By a MEMBER of PARLIAMENT.

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A SHORT

ADDRESS

TO THE

GOVERNMENT, &c.

NO man wants to be informed, that the colonies are of great importance to the commerce, the wealth, and the power of Great Britain. And it is as well known on the other hand, that the peace, proſperity, and riches of the colonies depend on their alliance with the mother country, and that millions have been expended by us for their protection. It muſt therefore be dreadful to reflect on the conſequences of a quarrel between ſuch friends: and if there be any perſon, who from any

motives whatſoever would widen the breach, he muſt be an enemy to the welfare of both countries. But he that wiſhes to bring the contending parties to reaſon and moderation, has a right to be heard; and whatever cenſures he may draw upon himſelf, as a ſuppoſed miniſterial agent, he will yet have the ſatisfaction of reflecting, that he has not deſerved ill of his country by ſuch an attempt.

It is with this view *only*, that I have been induced to offer my ſentiments to the public on this occaſion; from a perſuaſion that I am not altogether unqualified to judge of the merits of the queſtion before us, having paſſed many years of my life in one of the colonies, and traded very extenſively in them all. The author of theſe papers was favoured with a long, though unſucceſsful, conference with the miniſter then in being, on the ſubject of the American ſtamp-act; in the courſe of which, all that has ſince

happened, in conſequence of that ill-concerted meaſure, was very nearly predicted.

That I may bring the matter in diſpute to a ſhort iſſue, I will ſuppoſe that all, or the greateſt part of my readers, are firmly perſuaded that the legiſlative authority of Great Britain extends itſelf to all its dominions without reſerve. However, to thoſe who do not admit this, I muſt obſerve, that the contrary opinion was never broached till within a few years; nor could be, without the utmoſt abſurdity. For let me aſk—are the Colonies a part of the Britiſh dominions, or are they not? If they are, then are they ſubject to the ſupreme authority of Great Britain: and was there ever any ſupreme authority in the world without the power of taxation? Whatever applauſe therefore might at the time be given to the abettors of that popular notion, that repreſentation and taxation were inſeparable from each other, the

event has proved it to be (in *their* ſenſe of it) the moſt peſtilential doctrine that ever was advanced; and perhaps the ſource of all the miſchief which prevails in this unnatural conteſt. Till they were *better* taught by the patriots of their mother country, there was not a lawyer, nor even a man of any tolerable education in the whole continent of America, who would not readily have ſubſcribed to this opinion, that every act of the Britiſh parliament was obligatory on thoſe colonies which were named in the act; and that the ſeveral inhabitants conſidered themſelves as univerſally bound by it. Wherever their own provincial laws are ſilent, it has been the invariable practice of their lawyers to be regulated by the laws of England: nay, they have found it neceſſary, for the information of their courts of juſtice, to purchaſe the Statutes at Large at the public expence; and in ſome of the colonies, acts of aſſembly have been paſſed, to make the purchaſe by a public

tax;

tax; and even to ſubject that county to a penalty, which neglected to purchaſe them.

The right of juriſdiction being indiſputable, it is not neceſſary for us to enter into that labyrinth of controverſy concerning chartered rights, and the natural rights of mankind. The latter of theſe have no meaning: for men are born members of ſociety, and conſequently can have no rights, but ſuch as are given by the laws of that ſociety to which they belong. To ſuppoſe any thing elſe, is to ſuppoſe them out of ſociety, in a ſtate of nature. And neither will this come up to the point: for, is any man born without a father and mother? or is an infant upon a level with its parents? If not, natural right is natural nonſenſe, worth nothing in itſelf, and of no uſe but to ſet men together by the ears. Let us therefore revert to the origin of the diſpute; and conſider the ſtamp-tax as the ſeed-plot of our preſent misfortunes.

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Though the power of taxing the Americans is undeniable, that mode of taxation was propoſed by perſons who in this reſpect miſunderſtood the real intereſt both of Great Britain and America. It was an idea too haſtily conceived, too firmly maintained, and too peremptorily inſiſted on, even to the end. The friends however to both countries have now the ſatisfaction of reflecting, that they did not fail to aſſure the author of that tax, that it had every thing in it, which muſt render it hateful to the Americans: that it muſt needs be very oppreſſive in many inſtances; ſince whatever was laid by parliament would have been trebly increaſed in many parts of the colonies, when it came to be levied. That it would be attended with unſurmountable difficulties, and, after all, would be unprofitable to this country. Theſe objections were fully juſtified by the event; and indeed, many are the objections to any

tax

tax laid by the parliament of Great Britain, which ſhall *generally* affect the colonies; neither is it in the power of human ingenuity to form a tax that can be equal. This alone is an unanſwerable argument againſt any *general* tax in the colonies. And I hope the fate of the ſtamp-act will for ever diſcourage the legiſlature from making uſe of its authority in this way: but if ſuch a thing ſhould ever be attempted, there will always be found people enough, who know the intereſt of the whole, to oppoſe it effectually.

Of this meaſure then it is allowed that the colonies had great reaſon to complain; not becauſe they were taxed, but becauſe they were *ſo* taxed; whether this latter was the ground on which they complained is very much to be queſtioned; or rather it is beyond all doubt that it was far from being the caſe. In one word, they objected to the tax, as impoſed by thoſe, whom they con-

conſidered as having no right to tax them at all. Had they only objected to the ſtamp-act, as being productive of much inconvenience in the tranſaction of their public and private buſineſs, ſtill allowing the power, but modeſtly complaining of the mode in which it was exerciſed, they would have had a juſt demand on the attention of the Britiſh legiſlature, and would doubtleſs have obtained relief in a way moſt honourable both to themſelves and us: but the method which they choſe to adopt was to ſeek for redreſs in a way not to be juſtified on any principles of government whatſoever. However, for very wiſe and good reaſons, it was thought neceſſary to repeal the tax, and remove the burthen.

What then remained, but that the Americans ſhould gratefully acknowledge the kindneſs of their parent-ſtate, in taking away the cauſe of contention from them? What but an unnatural diſaffection could continue to alienate their hearts

hearts from that country, which heretofore they called their *home*; from whoſe ſupport they had derived ſuch unſpeakable advantages, and from whoſe rejection of them nothing but ruin was to be expected?

It is hardly worth while to mention another attempt of the Britiſh parliament to aſſert its right of taxing the colonies: I mean the tax on paper, glaſs, and painter's colours; this was another very exceptionable mode of taxation, taken up too inconſiderately by another very ingenious miniſter, whoſe endowments nevertheleſs were ſuch as rendered him a great ornament to his country while he lived, and his death a great loſs both to his friends and to the public. Notwithſtanding the allowed great abilities of this miniſter (ſuch is the frailty of human nature acting under the influence of prepoſſeſſion) a more abſurd or inſufficient tax was never conceived, both with reſpect to the Americans and our-

ſelves. They indeed complained; but we had no leſs cauſe: for the act was abſolutely *felo de ſe*. If we lay a tax upon our own manufactures exported to our colonies, what is this, but to injure ourſelves in a double capacity? It ſerves both to diſcourage the Americans from trading with us in thoſe commodities; and alſo (as its neceſſary conſequence) to tie up the hands of our own manufacturers. The miſchievous tendency therefore of this act was clearly ſeen, and the evil ſoon remedied itſelf; as will every other plan which is formed on no better principles of policy.

It having been judged neceſſary, on the repeal of the ſtamp-act, to declare the power of taxation, and the authority of the Britiſh juriſdiction, the repeal of that act, and of the other, was not ſufficient to extinguiſh the ſpirit of oppoſition. The malecontents in America did not ſcruple to quote the favourite doctrine of the Britiſh patriots; and it was no uncommon

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aſſertion, that they regarded Britiſh acts of parliament ſo far as they found them conducive to their eaſe and benefit, and no farther.

The reader will ſee how ill prepared they were, under theſe impreſſions, to receive that importation of teas by the Eaſt-India Company, which is the ground of their preſent uneaſineſs. It could not be a matter of conſequence to them, whether three pence per pound were laid on an article of luxury, which was not likely to affect the bulk of the coloniſts: but the truth is, any duty, laid upon any article, militated againſt their ideas of independency, and was therefore at all events to be rejected, as contradictory to their conceptions of liberty. No wonder then that this meaſure was oppoſed, notwithſtanding it was calculated in the end to render the commodity cheaper than it could be legally purchaſed before, and aſſerted our ſupremacy in the gentleſt manner.

The conſequence, which each party has great cauſe to lament, has been a fermentation, ſo nearly allied to actual rebellion, that it is hardly poſſible to draw the line of diſtinction betwixt them; and the coloniſts now ſtand forth, profeſſedly maintaining ſuch principles as muſt in their nature prove deſtructive to themſelves and the whole Britiſh empire; and ſuch indeed, as are inconſiſtent with any government in the world.

Whoever has attended to what I have already advanced, will, I think, do me the juſtice to allow, that I am not carried away by any enthuſiaſtic ideas of Britiſh authority over our American colonies. On the contrary, I have laid it down as a juſt principle, that the parliament of England can never be competent judges of the propriety of any tax, which is laid *in* the colonies, and may *generally* affect the Americans: but with reſpect to a tax upon an article of luxury, and

growth

growth of foreign countries, the caſe is widely different. The propriety of laying ſuch a tax is obvious; and it may, without difficulty, be carried into execution.

I will not venture to draw down upon myſelf the reſentment of the American ladies, by ſaying, that tea is not a neceſſary of life: indeed I can hardly doubt, but that they, with all their ideas of patriotiſm, find it difficult to ſupply the want of it at this time; unleſs it is ſmuggled: but it is moſt certainly an artificial neceſſary of life, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, and does not ſtand on the footing of other neceſſaries; and the uſe of it is a matter of choice, which however I will ſuppoſe it would be painful for them to diſpenſe with. But do they not by this partiality for a foreign commodity mark themſelves as proper ſubjects of taxation? And could a more eaſy, more equitable, more unexceptionable method have been deviſed, to in-

creaſe our own trade in ſo very material an article; to ſuppreſs a contraband trade with the Dutch; and ſupply our friends in America with what is become a neceſſary of life, on the moſt reaſonable terms?

The Britiſh legiſlature had the ſame motives for levying this tax in America, which they have for lowering taxes upon luxuries in England, viz. at once to meet the ſmuggler, and to enlarge the revenue? If it were poſſible to raiſe our ſupplies by taxing only the luxuries of mankind, I am ſure our governors here would never wiſh to have recourſe to other ways and means.

The Americans have hitherto contentedly ſubmitted to taxes on wine, molaſſes, &c. But why even to theſe, if America muſt not be taxed? If they now inſiſt that themſelves are to be the only judges, when and in what reſpects this inſtance of legiſlative authority is, or is not to be exerted, we muſt needs confeſs, that they

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are the moſt capricious ſubjects upon earth.

We have very good authority to ſuppoſe, that men are capable of cloathing their views of intereſt under the ſpecious pretence of patriotiſm, liberty, and independency. There is a *Demetrius* with his craftſmen in every country, and in every age; who, when they find their intereſt at ſtake, will ſoon grow clamorous, and encourage even idolatry itſelf, rather than ſuffer their *craft* to be brought to nought. It will be a great point of wiſdom in my countrymen carefully to diſtinguiſh betwixt the outcries of faction, and complaints of real grievances: above all, it highly concerns the legiſlature to make this diſtinction: an ill-timed compliance with a ſeditious humour, may prove no leſs injurious to us in the end, than a haughty contempt of well-grounded remonſtrances.

That a ſeditious ſpirit is at the bottom of this miſchief, and that it is not a real

grievance

grievance they complain of, is beyond a doubt; their own hearts muſt tell them, that, in few words, they wiſh to detach themſelves from the Britiſh ſovereignty over them. They are blind (in their preſent ſtate) to the train of evils that would follow; they eagerly purſue an *ignis fatuus*, which will lead them into inevitable ruin.

They are encouraged, doubtleſs, by malecontents amongſt ourſelves; by men, againſt whom all parties ought to unite; men of republican principles, ſubverſive of our conſtitution; avowed enemies to the preſent adminiſtration, who are willing to ſacrifice every thing to a ſpirit of contumacious oppoſition.

To ſuppoſe that men ſhould have no cauſe of complaint on any occaſion whatever, is to ſuppoſe an Utopian plan of government, exempt from the imperfections of human nature. But it is the art of ill-deſigning men to take advantage of the preſent diſſatisfaction, and magnify

magnify every little incident into a miſchievous deſign of government to oppreſs and to enſlave; to violate all laws, and abuſe authority to the ruin of dependent provinces.

Then it is urged, in language which is pretty ſure to captivate, that ſuch grievances are not to be borne by a free people; who, when they feel themſelves oppreſſed, have a right to take up arms, and, like their anceſtors, of famous memory, by *every* method to take care *ne quid detrimenti reſpublica capiat*. The truth is, confuſion and its conſequence (a general ſcramble) is the object of their hope; to thoſe who have nothing to loſe, every proſpect of gain is welcome. But what have men of property to expect? What but a ſequeſtration of their eſtates; which may be diſpoſed of, as they were heretofore, to ſerjeants, drummers, and all the inſtruments of republican uſurpation? Let us now proceed to the conſideration of ſome of their moſt material com-

plaints, and it will be no difficult matter to ſhew, that ſuch complaints are inſufficient to juſtify their conduct.

The coloniſts complain of a want of repreſentation; and think it an act of tyranny to propoſe taxes which ſo nearly affect themſelves, while they have no voice in our public councils. In anſwer to which, I muſt beg them to obſerve, that as they are colonies, and not kingdoms, they can be no more than virtually repreſented: and this they now are, being included in the commons as members of the kingdom of Great Britain. The laws and uſages of the kingdom determine what commoners are to elect for all the reſt, wherever diſperſed. Beſides, it would be grateful in them to remember, that when taxes really injurious were laid upon them, they found friends enough in the Britiſh parliament to get them repealed. And indeed I hope I have ſaid enough to prove, that it is the beſt policy of our government, to draw the line of taxation, with reſpect to the

colonies, by laying a duty only on the produce of foreign countries imported into them.

Yet are they continually aſking, how can we be aſſured, that taxation will terminate here? Who knows to what extent the principle may be carried, if it is once admitted? It is therefore much eaſier to get rid of the hazard at once, whatever conſequences may enſue.

By the late act reſpecting the duty on teas, the line is effectually drawn; and no miniſter of this country, who is qualified to fill ſuch an important ſtation, will ever think of going beyond it. It is not conſiſtent with the welfare of his country, nor his own credit, that he ever ſhould. What is wanted over and above ſuch taxes on proper articles imported into the colonies, they will always be allowed, by every judicious *financier*, to raiſe in their own way; and that, only when ſupport is abſolutely neceſſary, in time of war. Theſe were always my ſentiments, and

I heartily wiſh they had been approved of before the ſtamp-act took place.

I would aſk ſuch of our brethren in North America as are really in their ſenſes, and capable of examining the matter with a tolerable degree of candour; what could have been thought of leſs likely to become a ground of offence, what more reaſonable could have been propoſed or inſiſted on by any government, than this mode of neceſſary taxation? I would wiſh them, and their advocates here, to conſider the happineſs which the Americans really enjoy, and not perplex themſelves with the apprehenſion of evils, which they are never likely to ſuffer. Let them reflect on the policy of this country towards her colonies, and from the paſt let them form ſome judgment of the future. Have we not given a preference to their commodities before thoſe of other countries, by granting bounties on the importation of many articles, that they may be brought to our markets on the eaſieſt terms,

terms, and that their cultivation may receive every poſſible encouragement? Have we not offered great bounties for the advancement of many kinds of culture in the colonies? Do we not pay duties upon foreign goods when conſumed at home, on which goods the duties are drawn back when they go to America? Have we not, at their deſire, given encouragement to their whale fiſhery? Have any of their malecontents, in return for all this, calmly reflected how mild our laws were reſpecting the colonies, till it became neceſſary, (as well for their benefit as for our own honour), to treat them with a little wholeſome ſeverity? Did they not enjoy a greater degree of freedom, and better and milder laws, and leſs expence of government, than any people upon earth, till their rebellious contempt of the Britiſh legiſlature drew on them the proper reſentment of their friends in England. While the mother country was labouring under a moſt grievous burthen of debts and taxes,

were

were not they in the full enjoyment of Britiſh liberty, without partaking with her in any of her difficulties or diſtreſſes? Every moderate American will, I am ſure, accede to the truth of theſe obſervations, and will acknowledge that the returns which have been made are very unworthy of the lenity, and even tenderneſs, with which they have hitherto been treated.

The idea therefore of independence on the government of Great Britain is not leſs ungrateful, than it is abſurd and miſchievous. The only alternative in ſuch a caſe, muſt be civil diſſenſions, perhaps a civil war amongſt themſelves; or they muſt become ſubjects to ſome other power. As to the firſt of theſe, let them aſk themſelves, whether the diſſenſions their anceſtors had raiſed did not firſt compel them to quit their native country, and croſs the Atlantic? And as to the latter part of the alternative, what encouragement do they receive from

from the genius and ſpirit of any other religion or government, to hope for proſperity, peace, or liberty from an unnatural union with foreign powers? The very idea is pregnant with abſurdity, and the experiment would be fatal.

The moſt heated imagination can never carry any people to conceive, that it is poſſible to enjoy the benefits and bleſſings of government, without becoming ſubject to ſome inconveniencies, againſt which it is impoſſible for the laws to provide. And indeed this is the tax, which every individual finds it neceſſary to pay, for the enjoyment of many privileges and advantages, of which he would otherwiſe be deprived: the only queſtion is, whether the balance of the account is in favour of the ſubject ſo governed, or not? If it is, he has very little encouragement to ſolicit anarchy as a bleſſing, which hath juſtly been conſidered as one of the ſevereſt ſcourges of Providence to any country. How much better and wiſer is it to acquieſce,

under

under the perſuaſion, that it is not the intereſt (and conſequently not the deſire) of any well regulated government wantonly to oppreſs; and weighing every circumſtance in the balance of candour and equity, to ſubmit to ſlight inconveniencies, for the ſake of ſolid and ſubſtantial benefits; remembering that there muſt be no power eſtabliſhed upon earth, if we wait for *that* which is not liable to imperfection.

We have, for example, many *penal laws* in this country; in the execution of which, we all know how poſſible it is for ill-deſigning men to involve the innocent with the guilty, in ſpite of every endeavour to prevent it; even to the injury of their property and reputation, and the danger, and ſometimes the loſs of life itſelf. But will any ſober-minded perſon hence infer, that penal laws are unneceſſary; that they ought to be aboliſhed, becauſe they are liable to abuſe? The conſequences of ſuch a proceeding are too obvious to be inſiſted upon.

To

To the more violent among our fellow-ſubjects in America (if they have not entirely forfeited that appellation), I would only ſuggeſt a conſideration or two: they are too much heated to liſten patiently to arguments, or a diſplay of conſequences which they do not, or rather will not foreſee. Let me beg them only to look around them, and ſee with what company they are joined. They will probably diſcover, that their leaders have deſigns which themſelves never thought of; and that while they fancy themſelves inſpired with the moſt ſublime ideas of liberty, they are actually nothing more than the tools of faction, to be made uſe of for ſelfiſh purpoſes of intereſt, and afterwards to be diſcarded with contempt. It will be prudent in all thoſe who are well inclined, to inquire, how accounts ſtand betwixt Great Britain and thoſe who are diſaffected. Whether ſhe is indebted to them, or they to her? If the latter is the caſe, is

not this a deeply concerted plan, to put off the day of payment, or even perhaps to wipe out the debt? It may be the intereſt of a debtor to aim at innovations in the government, or even to overturn it, rather than to continue involved in circumſtances which render his ſituation deſperate. But are men of property and honour to become dupes to the artifice of perſons deſtitute of both? Let them deliver themſelves as ſoon as poſſible, from a connection deſtructive to their intereſt; let no clamours draw them into acts of open rebellion.

They will hear the Britiſh parliament vilified for dragging men from their families to a partial trial in England; for obſtructing their ports, eſtabliſhing admiralty-courts, and encouraging Popery by a law.

As to the two firſt of theſe, I agree ſo far with the complainants as to think, that the miniſter would have deſerved to be impeached, who ſhould have preſumed

ſumed to propoſe ſuch laws in a time of profound peace. But if it be conſidered in what ſtate and temper theſe laws found the coloniſts, I believe no candid perſon will heſitate to allow, that they are much fuller of mercy than ſeverity; and not only ſtrictly equitable, but highly expedient for the general good.

As to the admiralty-courts, they only operate againſt ſmugglers, of which therefore it is equally indecent and impolitic to complain, the complaint itſelf being a tacit acknowledgment of illegal practices. Very few Americans therefore, I ſhould hope, would be affected by theſe courts: and after all, they are not a new inſtitution.

"But our religion, ſay they, is attacked in the Quebec Bill, and an alarming inſult is thereby offered to every Proteſtant, by the encouragement of that religion, whoſe principles are of a ſanguinary nature." Had not the Canadians a right to demand what has been

granted them? Were not all the religious advantages they now enjoy by virtue of this bill, agreed to by treaty many years ago; and is not this inſtance of equity and humanity ſufficient to engage their gratitude and affection towards us? But the patriots on each ſide of the water, find it no difficult matter to play upon the paſſions of men leſs artful than themſelves, and conjure up ghoſts and hobgoblins to frighten them out of their ſenſes: perſuading them, that by this act a ſword is put into the hands of the Canadians, to cut the throat of every loyal Proteſtant in the colonies: a ſuſpicion, which the malice of the devil himſelf could ſcarcely have ſuggeſted.

What remains then, but that our governors aſſume that confidence, which is the reſult of an honeſt intention to promote the general welfare? It is their deſire, I am well convinced, to purſue and recommend ſuch meaſures as will in the end advance the benefit of the whole.

And

And as this is a matter too big for party-prejudice to interpoſe in, I moſt heartily wiſh, that her voice could for a while be ſuppreſſed, that every maxim of ſound policy might be adopted, and the counſels of adminiſtration might not be impeded. I believe there never was a time in which unanimity, in ſupporting the honour and authority of the Britiſh legiſlature, was more neceſſary: and every man who ſuffers his paſſions or private intereſts to lead him aſtray, on this occaſion, is either weak or wicked. The greateſt danger to the leaders of adminiſtration is, that their humanity ſhould be wrought upon by the repreſentations of thoſe, who are nevertheleſs ſincerely to be pitied; and to whom it will be a falſe clemency, as well as falſe policy in itſelf, to grant a temporary ſatisfaction, which cannot fail to be a long and laſting injury.

I earneſtly hope, they will do all they can to eaſe the Americans, and give them every aſſurance of their friendly diſpoſi-

tion

tion towards them; and of their readineſs to repeal whatever law is found to be burthenſome, or injurious to their intereſt: but not whilſt they continue in their preſent diſpoſition. A ſubject has nothing to aſk, at leaſt nothing to expect, while he is under arms, or in a ſtate of abſolute reſiſtance to legal authority; and government has nothing to grant, which is demanded in ſuch a manner, and under ſuch circumſtances. Such miſtaken lenity would be weakneſs; which muſt terminate in the deſtruction of both countries.

But what ſhall be ſaid or done to ſatisfy the expectation of the merchants trading to the colonies? Every man of ſenſibility muſt be filled with concern for the loſſes they muſt neceſſarily ſuſtain on this occaſion. Hurried away by what they feel at preſent, and blind to every future conſequence, however fatal to their intereſt, they will be tempted to make conceſſions, which muſt be ruinous in the end. But let them remember, that

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this momentuous affair muſt be conſidered only as it ſtands connected with the general good. They will not then preſs our governors imperfectly to heal that ſore, which under ſuch treatment will ſoon become incurable. They will rather urge them to proceed, in a matter ſo important, with reſolution, with a comprehenſion of the whole queſtion, and every circumſtance attending it. A temporiſing conduct, below the dignity of our legiſlature, will ſet our traffic with the Americans on ſo precarious a footing, that it cannot be carried on with any ſecurity. The merchant is concerned as well as the miniſter to conſider the extent of the American demands. If only the repeal of the duty on teas is required, that, as a matter of little conſequence, under certain conditions, I ſhould apprehend, will hardly be refuſed. But if they deny that we have any power to tax them, and this be the ground of their complaint, ſuch a reſolution ſtrikes at the root of all our trade:

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the conſequence will be a virtual repeal of the act of navigation; the colonies will become independent ſeparate ſtates, and they will trade with Great Britain juſt as far as they find it convenient to themſelves, and no farther. Is not this the language of their favourite authors at this time? "Let Britain treat fairly with us, we are ready to grant them any reaſonable indulgence: but let their expectations be limited within the bounds of reaſon; let them not ſuppoſe, that we will have any enumeration * on our goods. They ſhall be welcome to have ſuch of our commodities, as they can conſume, but we will not be obliged to conſign our goods to Engliſh merchants, to be ſent by them to foreign ports, to which we can ſend them with much greater advantage to ourſelves. We are willing to take from them the goods manufactured in England; but we will not

* Enumerated commodities are ſuch as are ſpecified in the Book of Rates, to be ſhipped for England only.

be compelled to come to them for the produce of other countries, which we can procure in return for our own produce, without the charges of commiſſion, &c. which we now pay to Great Britain." Such is the language of a people, with whom this mercantile country is ſo nearly connected to a prodigious annual amount. And the event of a partial, temporary, ill-founded conceſſion, at this time, would be a determination in the colonies to ſupply us with their produce for money only, and to carry our caſh to whatever country they ſhould think proper, to purchaſe with it the manufactures of foreigners.

Nor will the admiſſion of this dangerous maxim, that we have not the power of taxing the colonies, act leſs forcibly to the prejudice of our ſugar-planters, and the merchants concerned in the Weſt Indian trade. All the duties on ſugars, rum, molaſſes, coffee, cacao, &c. with all the prohibitions on the Ameri-

can conſumption of the produce of foreign iſlands, are ſo many circumſtances at preſent in favour of our ſugar-planters. But ſhould the Americans withdraw themſelves from their allegiance to Great Britain, and form an independent ſtate, our merchants and planters will loſe the benefit of the North American conſumption, unleſs they bring down the price of their goods to a level with that of the French, Dutch, Spaniards, Danes, &c. which would end in the inevitable ruin of the Weſt Indian iſlands. The intereſt of the colonies will induce them to trade with thoſe, to whom they can ſell their produce to the greateſt advantage: and in conſequence of that, they will become the colonies of thoſe nations with whom they trade; while they put riches and power into the hands of the enemies of this country.

Who does not foreſee the conſequences of ſuch a defection? Nothing leſs might be expected to follow than the im-

poveriſhment of our merchants, the ruin of our ſugar colonies, and the exceeding great diſtreſs of our own manufacturers. The gentlemen in the landed intereſt muſt not expect to be unconcerned ſpectators of this ſad cataſtrophe: it is a whirlpool, which muſt involve all ranks and orders of men. Let me then intreat all whom it concerns (and whom doth it not concern?) to have no ſhare in bringing ſuch accumulated evils upon themſelves, their country, and their poſterity. Let not the fear of a preſent ſuſpenſion of trade with the colonies biaſs the judgment of thoſe who are engaged with them, to propoſe or conſent to any thing, which will prove their utter ruin in the end. Rather let them agree to *ſupport each other* with firmneſs and unanimity, till the ſtorm be blown over. Let not the Americans be united againſt us as *one man* (the language in which they delight to expreſs themſelves), while we, like a rope of ſand, are falling away from

each other, every one purſuing a phantom of private intereſt, and neglecting the general concern.

Can there be found, among gentlemen connected with one another by the moſt ſacred and intereſting ties, a ſelfiſh deſire of riſing on the ruins of their countrymen, and fellow-merchants? I would willingly believe that there is no man amongſt us ſo deſtitute of honour, as to take this opportunity of pointing out to his correſpondents in America particular perſons, who happen to differ from him, in order to expoſe them to their reſentment, and increaſe his own trade. But my information leaves me no room to doubt that there are ſuch miſcreants; men who wiſh to keep up the preſent fermentation, and who inquire into the ſentiments of their brethren, that they may make this malicious uſe of their intelligence. Of ſuch men I can ſay no more, than that they would not ſcruple to blow up their country for the chance of

of catching ſomething as it falls from the air. There is another ſet of men who make it a point to oppoſe the miniſtry; and conſider the preſent diſpute only as a battery to be played off againſt thoſe who are in power, that there may be a change of miniſters. This is beneath the dignity of patriotiſm, and is indeed the laſt reſource of malevolence and deſperation. When matters of leſs moment are in agitation, the trumpet of ſedition may be ſounded, till he who blows it is weary, and they who hear it are tired of attending to it: and ſometimes the promoters of faction may find their end anſwered by it, while the public is very little intereſted in the event. The cry of liberty in a free country like this, will, and ought to be, heard; but the line ſhould carefully be drawn which ſeparates it from licentiouſneſs: there is no true idea of liberty, which does not include ſubjection to, as well as protection from, the laws of our country.

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I have only a few words to add, and will addreſs them to the manufacturers of this kingdom; who are deeply intereſted in the preſent queſtion. Let me beg them to conſider, how far our compliance with the Americans in their preſent circumſtances will affect *them*; leſt they alſo, carried away by conſiderations of *immediate* intereſt, and miſled by artful inſinuations from falſe friends, ſhould haſtily adopt meaſures, which, inſtead of alleviating, may increaſe and perpetuate the preſent evils. The manufacturer cannot but know, that there are many laws to protect him from injuries, which he might otherwiſe receive in his commerce with America. Part of the iron which is here manufactured, is imported from thence, and exported thither in a variety of articles, on which the maintenance of thouſands, and ten thouſands of our induſtrious poor depends. By laws now ſubſiſting, no perſon in America can ſet up any ſlatting, ſlitting, or tilting mill.

mill. Without this prohibition, they would be able to manufacture iron on cheaper terms than we can; and the meaneſt mechanic in Birmingham, or Sheffield, muſt foreſee what would be the conſequence if the Americans ſhould aſſume to themſelves this article of trade. The ſame proviſions are made in favour of the manufacturers of hats, and ſundry other articles; all which will be defeated, if we now give up the point in diſpute to the Americans; and every advantage will be wreſted out of the hands of our own people, to be tranferred to thoſe, who will ſet up manufactories for themſelves, and ſoon convince us, how very little occaſion they have to trade with Great Britain.

Beware then, I beſeech you, my countrymen, that you do not weaken the hands of government by vexatious oppoſition; by inflammatory paragraphs; by unſeaſonable ſpeeches, petitions, and remonſtrances. No man can be ſo competent

petent a judge of the matter, now in agitation, as they who are maſters of all the evidence. The greateſt enemy of the perſon now at the helm will allow, that he is neither profligate in principle, nor inattentive to the general intereſt of his country. It will therefore be rational in us to ſupport him in every meaſure, which may tend to bring back the Americans to their duty. The welfare of our own country, and of theirs, depends upon it: and, as we have, for more than an hundred years paſt, convinced them, at the expence of many millions, that we are too much their friends to ſuffer them to fall a prey to their enemies: let us, in the preſent inſtance (in ſpite of all their endeavours to the contrary) labour farther to convince them, that we will not, while we can poſſibly prevent it, ſuffer them to fall a prey to themſelves.

FINIS.